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EDMOND NEAL

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

EDMOND NEAL,

Plaintiff,

vs.

A. VENICE, LLC; DOES 1 to 10,
Defendants.

Case No.:

**COMPLAINT FOR INJUNCTIVE
RELIEF AND DAMAGES FOR
VIOLATION OF:**

1. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES
ACT, 42 U.S.C. §12131 et seq.;
2. CALIFORNIA'S UNRUH CIVIL
RIGHTS ACT, CAL CIV. CODE §§ 51 -
52 et seq.;
3. CALIFORNIA'S DISABLED
PERSONS ACT, CAL CIV. CODE §54 et
seq.
4. CALIFORNIA HEALTH & SAFETY
CODE § 19955, et seq.
5. NEGLIGENCE

Plaintiff EDMOND NEAL ("Plaintiff") complains of Defendants A. VENICE,
LLC; DOES 1 to 10 ("Defendants") and alleges as follows:

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PARTIES

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2 1. Plaintiff is a California resident with a physical disability. Plaintiff is an
3 amputee below his right knee. Plaintiff requires the use of a wheelchair at all times when
4 traveling in public.

5 2. Defendants are, or were at the time of the incident, the real property owners,
6 business operators, lessors and/or lessees of the real property for a beauty supply store
7 (“Business”) located at or about 12553 Venice Blvd., Los Angeles, California.

8 3. The true names and capacities, whether individual, corporate, associate or
9 otherwise of Defendant DOES 1 to 10, and each of them, are unknown to Plaintiff, who
10 therefore sues said Defendants by such fictitious names. Plaintiff will ask leave of Court
11 to amend this Complaint when the true names and capacities have been ascertained.
12 Plaintiff is informed and believes and, based thereon, alleges that each such fictitiously
13 named Defendants are responsible in some manner, and therefore, liable to Plaintiff for
14 the acts herein alleged.

15 4. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges that, at all relevant
16 times, each of the Defendants was the agent, employee, or alter-ego of each of the other
17 Defendants, and/or was acting in concert with each of the other Defendants, and in doing
18 the things alleged herein was acting with the knowledge and consent of the other
19 Defendants and within the course and scope of such agency or employment relationship.

20 5. Whenever and wherever reference is made in this Complaint to any act or
21 failure to act by a defendant or Defendants, such allegations and references shall also be
22 deemed to mean the acts and failures to act of each Defendant acting individually, jointly
23 and severally.

24 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

25 6. The Court has jurisdiction of this action pursuant to 28 USC §§ 1331 and
26 1343 for violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, (42 USC §12101, *et*
27 *seq.*)
28

1 7. Pursuant to pendant jurisdiction, attendant and related causes of action,
2 arising from the same nucleus of operating facts, are also brought under California law,
3 including, but not limited to, violations of California Civil Code §§51, 51.5, 52(a), 52.1,
4 54, 54., 54.3 and 55.

5 8. Plaintiff's claims are authorized by 28 USC §§ 2201 and 2202.

6 9. Venue is proper in this court pursuant to 28 USC §1391(b). The real
7 property which is the subject of this action is located in this district, Los Angeles County,
8 California, and Plaintiff's causes of action arose in this district.

9 **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

10 10. In or about March of 2023, Plaintiff went to the Business.

11 11. The Business is a beauty supply store business establishment, open to the
12 public, and is a place of public accommodation and affects commerce through its
13 operation. Defendants provide parking spaces for customers.

14 12. While attempting to enter the Business during each visit, Plaintiff personally
15 encountered a number of barriers that interfered with his ability to use and enjoy the
16 goods, services, privileges, and accommodations offered at the Business.

17 13. To the extent of Plaintiff's personal knowledge, the barriers at the Business
18 included, but were not limited to, the following:

- 19 a. Defendants failed to comply with the federal and state standards for
20 the parking space designated for persons with disabilities. Defendants
21 failed to provide the parking space identification sign with the
22 International Symbol of Accessibility.
- 23 b. Defendants failed to comply with the federal and state standards for
24 the parking space designated for persons with disabilities. Defendants
25 failed to post required signage such as "Van Accessible" and
26 "Minimum Fine \$250" and "Unauthorized Parking."
- 27 c. Defendants failed to maintain the parking space designated for
28 persons with disabilities to comply with the federal and state

standards. Defendants failed to install the mark on the space with the International Symbol of Accessibility with correct dimensions.

14. These barriers and conditions denied Plaintiff the full and equal access to the Business and caused his difficulty and frustration. Plaintiff wishes to return and patronize the Business, however, Plaintiff is deterred from visiting the Business because his knowledge of these violations prevents his from returning until the barriers are removed.

15. Based on the violations, Plaintiff alleges, on information and belief, that there are additional barriers to accessibility at the Business after further site inspection. Plaintiff seeks to have all barriers related to his disability remedied. *See Doran v. 7-Eleven, Inc.* 524 F.3d 1034 (9th Cir. 2008).

16. In addition, Plaintiff alleges, on information and belief, that Defendants knew that particular barriers render the Business inaccessible, violate state and federal law, and interfere with access for the physically disabled.

17. At all relevant times, Defendants had and still have control and dominion over the conditions at this location and had and still have the financial resources to remove these barriers without much difficulty or expenses to make the Business accessible to the physically disabled in compliance with ADDAG and Title 24 regulations. Defendants have not removed such barriers and have not modified the Business to conform to accessibility regulations.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

VIOLATION OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990

18. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior paragraphs in this complaint.

19. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), no individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any place of

1 public accommodation by any person who owns, leases, or leases to, or operates a place
2 of public accommodation. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a).

3 20. Discrimination, *inter alia*, includes:

- 4 a. A failure to make reasonable modification in policies, practices, or
5 procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford such
6 goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations
7 to individuals with disabilities, unless the entity can demonstrate that
8 making such modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of
9 such goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or
10 accommodations. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(ii).
- 11 b. A failure to take such steps as may be necessary to ensure that no
12 individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or
13 otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the
14 absence of auxiliary aids and services, unless the entity can
15 demonstrate that taking such steps would fundamentally alter the
16 nature of the good, service, facility, privilege, advantage, or
17 accommodation being offered or would result in an undue burden. 42
18 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iii).
- 19 c. A failure to remove architectural barriers, and communication barriers
20 that are structural in nature, in existing facilities, and transportation
21 barriers in existing vehicles and rail passenger cars used by an
22 establishment for transporting individuals (not including barriers that
23 can only be removed through the retrofitting of vehicles or rail
24 passenger cars by the installation of a hydraulic or other lift), where
25 such removal is readily achievable. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iv).
- 26 d. A failure to make alterations in such a manner that, to the maximum
27 extent feasible, the altered portions of the facility are readily
28 accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including

1 individuals who use wheelchairs or to ensure that, to the maximum
 2 extent feasible, the path of travel to the altered area and the
 3 bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the altered
 4 area, are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with
 5 disabilities where such alterations to the path or travel or the
 6 bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the altered
 7 area are not disproportionate to the overall alterations in terms of cost
 8 and scope. 42 U.S.C. § 12183(a)(2).

9 21. Where parking spaces are provided, accessible parking spaces shall be
 10 provided. 1991 ADA Standards § 4.1.2(5); 2010 ADA Standards § 208. One in every
 11 eight accessible spaces, but not less than one, shall be served by an access aisle 96 in
 12 (2440 mm) wide minimum and shall be designated “van accessible.” 1991 ADA
 13 Standards § 4.1.2(5)(b). For every six or fraction of six parking spaces, at least one shall
 14 be van parking space. 2010 ADA Standards § 208.2.4.

15 22. Under the ADA, the method and color of marking are to be addressed by
 16 State or local laws or regulations. *See* 36 C.F.R., Part 1191. Under the California
 17 Building Code (“CBC”), the parking space identification signs shall include the
 18 International Symbol of Accessibility. Parking identification signs shall be reflectorized
 19 with a minimum area of 70 square inches. Additional language or an additional sign
 20 below the International Symbol of Accessibility shall state “Minimum Fine \$250.” A
 21 parking space identification sign shall be permanently posted immediately adjacent and
 22 visible from each parking space, shall be located with its centerline a maximum of 12
 23 inches from the centerline of the parking space and may be posted on a wall at the
 24 interior end of the parking space. *See* CBC § 11B-502.6, *et seq.*

25 23. Moreover, an additional sign shall be posted either in a conspicuous place at
 26 each entrance to an off-street parking facility or immediately adjacent to on-site
 27 accessible parking and visible from each parking space. The additional sign shall not be
 28 less than 17 inches wide by 22 inches high. The additional sign shall clearly state in

1 letters with a minimum height of 1 inch the following: “Unauthorized vehicles parked in
2 designated accessible spaces not displaying distinguishing placards or special license
3 plates issued for persons with disabilities will be towed always at the owner’s expense...”
4 *See* CBC § 11B-502.8, *et seq.*

5 24. Here, Defendants failed to provide the parking space identification sign with
6 the International Symbol of Accessibility. In addition, Defendants failed to provide signs
7 stating “Minimum Fine \$250” and “Van Accessible.” Moreover, Defendants failed to
8 provide the additional sign with the specific languages stating “Unauthorized vehicles
9 parked in designated accessible spaces not displaying distinguishing placards or special
10 license plates issued for persons with disabilities will be towed always at the owner’s
11 expense...”

12 25. The surface of each accessible car and van space shall have surface
13 identification complying with either of the following options: The outline of a profile
14 view of a wheel chair with occupant in white on a blue background a minimum 36” wide
15 by 36” high (914 mm x 914 mm). The centerline of the profile view shall be a maximum
16 of 6 inches (152 mm) from the centerline of the parking space, its sides parallel to the
17 length of the parking space and its lower side or corner aligned with the end of the
18 parking space length or by outlining or painting the parking space in blue and outlining
19 on the ground in white or a suitable contrasting color a profile view of a wheel chair with
20 occupant. *See* CBC § 11B-502.6.4, *et seq.*

21 26. Here, Defendants failed to install the mark on the surface with the
22 International Symbol of Accessibility with correct dimensions as it was too small.

23 27. A public accommodation shall maintain in operable working condition those
24 features of facilities and equipment that are required to be readily accessible to and usable
25 by persons with disabilities by the Act or this part. 28 C.F.R. 35.211(a).

26 28. By failing to maintain the facility to be readily accessible and usable by
27 Plaintiff, Defendants are in violation of Plaintiff’s rights under the ADA and its related
28 regulations.

1 29. The Business has denied and continues to deny full and equal access to
 2 Plaintiff and to other people with disabilities. Plaintiff has been and will continue to be
 3 discriminated against due to the lack of accessible facilities, and therefore, seeks
 4 injunctive relief to alter facilities to make such facilities readily accessible to and usable
 5 by individuals with disabilities.

6 **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

7 **VIOLATION OF THE UNRUH CIVIL RIGHTS ACT**

8 30. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior
 9 paragraphs in this complaint.

10 31. California Civil Code § 51 states, “All persons within the jurisdiction of this
 11 state are free and equal, and no matter what their sex, race, color, religion, ancestry,
 12 national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sexual
 13 orientation, citizenship, primary language, or immigration status are entitled to the full
 14 and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business
 15 establishments of every kind whatsoever.”

16 32. California Civil Code § 52 states, “Whoever denies, aids or incites a denial,
 17 or make any discrimination or distinction contrary to Section 51, 51.5, or 51.6, is liable
 18 for each and every offense for the actual damages, and any amount that may be
 19 determined by a jury, or a court sitting without a jury, up to a maximum of three times the
 20 amount of actual damage but in no case less than four thousand dollars (\$4,000) and any
 21 attorney’s fees that may be determined by the court in addition thereto, suffered by any
 22 person denied the rights provided in Section 51, 51.5, or 51.6.

23 33. California Civil Code § 51(f) specifies, “a violation of the right of any
 24 individual under federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336)
 25 shall also constitute a violation of this section.”

26 34. The actions and omissions of Defendants alleged herein constitute a denial
 27 of full and equal accommodation, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services by
 28 physically disabled persons within the meaning of California Civil Code §§ 51 and 52.

1 Defendants have discriminated against Plaintiff in violation of California Civil Code §§
2 51 and 52.

3 35. The violations of the Unruh Civil Rights Act caused Plaintiff to experience
4 difficulty, discomfort, or embarrassment. The Defendants are also liable for statutory
5 damages as specified in California Civil Code §55.56(a)-(c).

6 **THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

7 **VIOLATION OF CALIFORNIA DISABLED PERSONS ACT**

8 36. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior
9 paragraphs in this complaint.

10 37. California Civil Code § 54.1(a) states, “Individuals with disabilities shall be
11 entitled to full and equal access, as other members of the general public, to
12 accommodations, advantages, facilities, medical facilities, including hospitals, clinics,
13 and physicians’ offices, and privileges of all common carriers, airplanes, motor vehicles,
14 railroad trains, motorbuses, streetcars, boats, or any other public conveyances or modes
15 of transportation (whether private, public, franchised, licensed, contracted, or otherwise
16 provided), telephone facilities, adoption agencies, private schools, hotels, loading places,
17 places of public accommodations, amusement, or resort, and other places in which the
18 general public is invited, subject only to the conditions and limitations established by
19 law, or state or federal regulation, and applicable alike to all persons.

20 38. California Civil Code § 54.3(a) states, “Any person or persons, firm or
21 corporation who denies or interferes with admittance to or enjoyment of public facilities
22 as specified in Sections 54 and 54.1 or otherwise interferes with the rights of an
23 individual with a disability under Sections 54, 54.1 and 54.2 is liable for each offense for
24 the actual damages, and any amount as may be determined by a jury, or a court sitting
25 without a jury, up to a maximum of three times the amount of actual damages but in no
26 case less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and any attorney’s fees that may be
27 determined by the court in addition thereto, suffered by any person denied the rights
28 provided in Section 54, 54.1, and 54.2.

1 39. California Civil Code § 54(d) specifies, “a violation of the right of an
2 individual under Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336) also
3 constitute a violation of this section, and nothing in this section shall be construed to limit
4 the access of any person in violation of that act.

5 40. The actions and omissions of Defendants alleged herein constitute a denial
6 of full and equal accommodation, advantages, and facilities by physically disabled
7 persons within the meaning of California Civil Code § 54. Defendants have
8 discriminated against Plaintiff in violation of California Civil Code § 54.

9 41. The violations of the California Disabled Persons Act caused Plaintiff to
10 experience difficulty, discomfort, and embarrassment. The Defendants are also liable for
11 statutory damages as specified in California Civil Code §55.56(a)-(c).

12 **FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

13 **CALIFORNIA HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 19955, et seq.**

14 42. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior
15 paragraphs in this complaint.

16 43. Plaintiff and other similar physically disabled persons who require the use of
17 a wheelchair are unable to use public facilities on a “full and equal” basis unless each
18 such facility is in compliance with the provisions of California Health & Safety Code §
19 19955 et seq. Plaintiff is a member of the public whose rights are protected by the
20 provisions of California Health & Safety Code § 19955 et seq.

21 44. The purpose of California Health & Safety Code § 1995 et seq. is to ensure
22 that public accommodations or facilities constructed in this state with private funds
23 adhere to the provisions of Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 4450) of Division 5 of
24 Title 1 of the Government Code. The code relating to such public accommodations also
25 require that “when sanitary facilities are made available for the public, clients, or
26 employees in these stations, centers, or buildings, they shall be made available for
27 persons with disabilities.
28

1 45. Title II of the ADA holds as a “general rule” that no individual shall be
 2 discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of goods
 3 (or use), services, facilities, privileges, and accommodations offered by any person who
 4 owns, operates, or leases a place of public accommodation. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a).
 5 Further, each and every violation of the ADA also constitutes a separate and distinct
 6 violation of California Civil Code §§ 54(c) and 54.1(d), thus independently justifying an
 7 award of damages and injunctive relief pursuant to California law, including but not
 8 limited to Civil Code § 54.3 and Business and Professions Code § 17200, et seq.

9 **FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

10 **NEGLIGENCE**

11 46. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior
 12 paragraphs in this complaint.

13 47. Defendants have a general duty and a duty under the ADA, Unruh Civil
 14 Rights Act and California Disabled Persons Act to provide safe and accessible facilities
 15 to the Plaintiff.

16 48. Defendants breached their duty of care by violating the provisions of ADA,
 17 Unruh Civil Rights Act and California Disabled Persons Act.

18 49. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants’ negligent conduct, Plaintiff
 19 has suffered damages.

20 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

21 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully prays for relief and judgment against
 22 Defendants as follows:

23 1. For preliminary and permanent injunction directing Defendants to comply
 24 with the Americans with Disability Act and the Unruh Civil Rights Act;

25 2. Award of all appropriate damages, including but not limited to statutory
 26 damages, general damages and treble damages in amounts, according to proof;

27 3. Award of all reasonable restitution for Defendants’ unfair competition
 28 practices;

1 4. Reasonable attorney's fees, litigation expenses, and costs of suit in this
2 action;

3 5. Prejudgment interest pursuant to California Civil Code § 3291; and

4 6. Such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

5 **DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY**

6 Pursuant to Rule 38(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiff hereby
7 demands a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

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9 Dated: May 11, 2023

SO. CAL. EQUAL ACCESS GROUP

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12 By: /s/ Jason J. Kim
13 Jason J. Kim, Esq.
14 Attorneys for Plaintiff
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